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## A 'green' boat: Will buyers bite?

**With help from former Vice President Al Gore, a fishing captain tries to hook fellow boaters on the threat global warming poses to South Florida.**

BY CURTIS MORGAN

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Dan Kipnis, veteran Miami fishing captain and familiar face on the tournament circuit, would normally fit right in at the Miami International Boat Show.

But Kipnis, fresh off tutoring sessions with former Vice President Al Gore, is giving a series of talks on climate change at the show. He knows he won't be preaching to the choir -- most of this choir has come to the Miami Beach Convention Center to dream about buying something bigger, faster and invariably thirstier for fossil fuel.

Perhaps it's the new 39-footer from SeaVee, a handsome fishing boat sporting the latest trend -- four honking 300-horse Mercury outboards hanging off the transom. Chad Buckley, down from Stuart to check it and similar models out, stifled laughter at a question about buying a vessel that requires a 570-gallon gas tank.

"I've got to say anybody looking at this bad boy ain't thinking about the price of gas or global warming," he said. "Maybe they ought to, but honestly, that's not even on my radar screen when I'm thinking about a boat."

In this venue, Gore's *Inconvenient Truth* -- an unexpected hit as both book and movie -- is more than inconvenient, it's irrelevant.

### SPREADING THE GOSPEL

Kipnis, among the first of 1,000 disciples Gore plans to train to help spread his gospel of global warming, aims to convert skeptics -- even if it's one skipper at a time.

"It's a tough audience, but I like a challenge," Kipnis said Thursday, before debuting his version of Gore's story to an audience of about a dozen.

Kipnis will put on his fishing-focused version -- with more about reefs, corals and South Florida waters, along with plenty of pictures of trophy catches -- again Sunday and Monday. Gore himself also is scheduled to come to Miami on Feb. 28 to give his popular multimedia lecture for University of Miami students, faculty and staff.

While Gore's book and movie have been well publicized, the training sessions haven't. Even with the movie out on DVD, Gore believed there were natural audiences out there that would miss it, said Kalee Kreider, his communications director.

So last May, Gore committed to personally training 1,000 people to give the talk, forming a nonprofit, The Climate Project, to do it. The response, on word-of-mouth alone, has been overwhelming, she said. There's a long backlog of applicants.

"It really tapped into a desire for fundamental environmental education that surprised everyone a bit, including maybe Al Gore," she said.

So far, 850 people have taken the three-day sessions in Nashville, Gore's hometown. They spend as many as 10 hours a day with the former vice president, who is aided by instructors from the National Wildlife Federation.

Applicants, who pay their own airfare and lodging, were picked to cover every state or to communicate to specific interest groups, said Kreider. "There can be a real power in having a local messenger, someone that is known to you."

That made Kipnis, an ardent fisheries conservationist who the Wildlife Federation already had tapped to talk to hunters and anglers about the issue, a natural. He directs billfish tournaments in South Florida and the Bahamas, is a former charter captain and has been president of the Miami Beach Rod & Reel Club.

He called his January group sessions with Gore ``an amazing experience."

Kipnis will gladly give the Gore talk to any interested group, but he spent weeks tweaking his for anglers. He projects plenty of sobering data about coral losses, rising ocean temperatures and what South Florida would lose with a 15-inch sea-level rise over a century, starting with 80 percent of Biscayne Bay's renowned bonefishing flats.

## **BOATING'S IMPACT**

He avoids bashing boaters for a gas-guzzling pastime that he himself pursues. For perspective, a small runabout with the most advanced mid-sized outboard might get six, maybe seven miles per gallon.

But that's still a huge leap, said Jerry Karnas, the wildlife federation's regional coordinator. The marine industry, pressured by California and federal environmental regulators, has built cleaner, quieter and more fuel-frugal motors well ahead of deadline. Some consumers also have embraced the technology.

"Boating is an impact, but it's a small impact," Karnas said. ``There just aren't that many boats out there. In terms of the big fish, we're looking at the way we design buildings, the way we produce energy, the way we fuel our cars.'

Kipnis suggests boaters offset that 1,000-gallon yacht fill-up by visiting a website -- [cwww.nativenenergy.com](http://www.nativenenergy.com) -- that promotes purchasing renewable power credits as compensation. At the very least, he advises using compact fluorescent lights, a step that saves 500 pounds of burned coal for every bulb.

Not everyone bought Kipnis' facts and assurances that ``I'm not a tree hugger, I'm really not."

One guy who heard part of the talk Thursday walked off muttering the cruder version of "horse-bleep" -- a view shared by some scientists, who consider data inconclusive or effects oversold. But Kipnis' passionate delivery also put a few extra butts in the seats and stopped passersby long enough to listen.

Ronald and Carol Strom, Coast Guard auxiliary members who came over on a bus with a group from Fort Myers Beach, wishes more boaters would have heard Kipnis.

"The entire Southwest area, all of the 10,000 islands, could be under water," Ronald Strom said. `This should be concern for anybody on the coast."